

Message Text

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ORIGIN SMI-01

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RCONROY, IAP, SMI

GROBINSON, GCO, SMI

DCHALLINOR, OAS, SMI IN SUBST

MHUXLEY, OAS, SMI IN SUBST

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OSCI, TBIO, TS

SUBJECT: SMI/SFCP - TERMINATION SFCP PARTICIPATION MEDITERRANEAN
MARINE SORTING CENTER (MMSC)

REF: TUNIS 4894, TUNIS 4790, TUNIS 4748

FOR AMBASSADOR AND MMSC DIRECTOR MENEZ FROM COERR AND HIGGINS

1. SMI GRATIFIED AT MOFA STATEMENTS RECOGNIZING

A) MMSC SUCCESS IN ACHIEVING ORIGINAL GOAL OF ESTABLISHING
MARINE LIFE IDENTIFICATION CENTER AND B)

CURRENT NEED FOR NEW MMSC ROLE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

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CENTER ASSOCIATED WITH UNEP. SMI SUGGESTED LATTER IN

CONVERSATIONS WITH GOT LAST MARCH AND IN JUNE OFFERED
PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL OUTLINE AS FIRST STEP.

2. SINCE RECEIPT OF REFERENCE TELEGRAMS, SMI HAS BEEN
STUDYING VARIOUS POSSIBLE WAYS OF ACCOMMODATING, ON THE ONE
HAND, FAVORABLE GOT REACTION TO PROPOSED REORIENTATION
OF MMSC AND, ON THE OTHER, NEW GOT REQUIREMENT THAT SFCP
PROJECTS BECOME PART OF GOT "BUDGETIZATION" PROCESS.

3. SMI REGRETS, HOWEVER, THAT OVERRIDING NEW DEVELOPMENT
NOW PREVENTS SFCP PARTICIPATION IN REORIENTATION OF MMSC
IN NEW ROLE AND SETS SEVERE LIMIT ON CONTINUED SFCP
PARTICIPATION IN MMSC TRADITIONAL ROLE. THE CONGRESS IS
CUTTING THE SMITHSONIAN'S SPECIAL FOREIGN CURRENCY
PROGRAM APPROPRIATION FOR RESEARCH FROM \$3.5 MILLION TO
\$1 MILLION. THIS DRASTIC REDUCTION, TAKEN IN CONJUNCTION
WITH MULTIPLE DEMANDS FOR HIGH PRIORITY RESEARCH PROJECTS,
MAKES IT NECESSARY TO TERMINATE SFCP PARTICIPATION IN MMSC
NO LATER THAN JUNE 30, 1975. (FYI: PRESENT CLIMATE FOR
EXCESS FOREIGN CURRENCY APPROPRIATIONS OFFERS LITTLE HOPE
OF INCREASE NEXT YEAR. END FYI.)

4. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH GOT LAST MARCH, SMI REFERRED TO THE
COMING TERMINATION OF SFCP PARTICIPATION IN MMSC BECAUSE
OF INEVITABLE EXHAUSTION OF SFCP FUNDS (POSSIBLY IN 3-5 YEARS),
AS ONE REASON FOR REORIENTATION THAT MIGHT GIVE MMSC
CONTINUING LIFE. CURRENT DEVELOPMENT HAS PRECIPITATED
TERMINATION WITH UNEXPECTED SUDDENESS. SMI HOPES THAT
GOT WILL BE ABLE TO ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MMSC
NOW AND ACHIEVE REORIENTATION BOTH FOR ITS POTENTIAL
ENVIRONMENTAL VALUE AND FOR THE WELFARE OF THE CENTER'S
TUNISIAN EMPLOYEES. SMI WILL GLADLY TRY TO ASSIST IN THE
NOW SPEEDED-UP TRANSITION.

5. DR. HIGGINS WILL VISIT TUNIS SEPTEMBER 4-8 AND,
SUBJECT TO YOUR GUIDANCE, WILL APPROPRIATELY INFORM HIS
GOT COUNTERPART AND MMSC EMPLOYEES AND BE PREPARED
TO CONSULT WITH TUNISIANS AS TO HOW SFCP WITHDRAWAL BY
JUNE 30, 1975 CAN BE EFFECTED IN MANNER MOST ACCEPTABLE TO
MMSC AND GOT.

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6. MEETING DECEMBER 3-4 MMSC GENERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(INCLUDING PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR HIGGINS, CO-PRINCIPAL
INVESTIGATOR AZOUZ, DIRECTOR MENEZ, CO-DIRECTOR KTARI,
BEN KHEDER OF MINAG AND REPRESENTATIVES OF FAO,
CIM AND UNESCO) COULD PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR MORE
DETAILED DISCUSSIONS ON PLAN FOR TERMINATION OF SFCP
PARTICIPATION, BEST USE OF SFCP FUNDS THROUGH JUNE 30, 1975,

AND POSSIBLE EXPEDITING OF MMSC RELATIONS WITH UNEP AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES WITH ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES.

7. SMI SYMPATHETIC WITH GOT EFFORT TO SYSTEMATIZE FOREIGN-FINANCED PROJECTS THROUGH "BUDGETIZATION" BUT GLAD THAT EMBASSY POINTED OUT TO MOFA THAT NATURE OF SFCP FUNDING IS DISTINCT FROM AID FUNDING AND MAKES AID EXAMPLE IRRELEVANT. SMI HOPES GOT WILL RECOGNIZE THAT PROBABLY INSURMOUNTABLE DIFFICULTIES WOULD ARISE SHOULD ATTEMPT BE MADE TO "BUDGETIZE" SFCP PROJECTS. IF SUCH PROBLEMS ARISE, SMI WILL HANDLE ON CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. INGERSOLL

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